



## The Presidential Apprentice

### Chapter One

#### Talking Bigly

Donald J Tramp's countenance permanently reflected a range of emotions that ran the gamut of rage to rancour with the occasional detour to vexation. His facial skin radiated an unearthly burnished, luminescent orange hue. His forehead bore deeply riven chasms of angst where previous frowns had ossified into fissures deeper than the Krubera Cave system. It was a place where teams of speleologists and phrenologists could come to grief, along with Tramp's thoughts. At times of anguish in extremis, his lips puckered into a tight porcine sphincter. The man's extraordinary mien was literally topped off by the pelt of a large blonde guinea pig that had expired on his head and, over the years, whose matted fur had intertwined with its host's natural but receding hairline.

Few things, apart from making money and molesting women, brought discernible joy to Tramp's existence. But, late in life he had discovered a new and unexpected source of pleasure. He simply adored being on the campaign trail. He was in his element. To Tramp being on the stump was pure theatre. It was so much more enjoyable than Reality TV with its tiresome, endless re-shoots in pursuit of the perfect camera angle, tedious adjustments to the set lighting, repetition of muffed lines, makeup makeovers and even his dialogue was scripted. He, The Great Businessman, became a mere mouthpiece for some cretinous minion's words and he found himself at the beck and call of a competing autocrat called 'a Director'. In contrast, the campaign was live, it was spontaneous. He was The Showman, the sole centre of attention and he alone could command the rapt veneration of his acolytes. His was the only voice and the only opinion that mattered. As an egotistical narcissist, he had ascended to seventh heaven.

His private Boeing 757, named Tramp Force One to infer the existence of a fleet of aircraft, screeched to a halt in front of a cavernous maintenance hanger in the outer environs of some suburban Midwestern city's airfield. His pilot flared the engines once more to ensure that the Great Man's arrival had attracted everyone's attention and envy. A mobile stairway specially adorned in his campaign colours and slogans drew alongside the liveried fuselage. The forward pressure-sealed plug door opened and then ..... nothing. Absolutely nothing else happened.

Inside the hanger the crowd of fervent Trampettes was being whipped into a frenzy by raucous patriotic music and strategically located motivators. When the main attraction failed to disembark from his plane after the engine flare, the motivators recognised their signal to lead the devotional chanting. The adherents in their vicinity willingly took up the mantle. In an instant, the hanger was reverberating to repeated incantations of 'We want Tramp'; 'Make America Bigly Again'; 'USA First, USA First, USA First'; 'Build the Wall' and the ever-popular crowd favourite 'Lock the Bitch Up.' Only once the chanting was audible inside the plane did the Great Man, his immaculately coutured and coiffured family and his entourage of campaign managers, PA's, PR's and security personnel deign to descend and move, like an all-conquering army flanking the victor, toward the hanger's yawning mouth and the rhapsody contained therein.

Tramp stood at the side of the stage, practicing his method acting technique by attempting humility, while a local political functionary fired the throng to new levels of Republican rapture by adopting the gravel-voiced stentorian tones of an announcer at a boxing title contest to declare: 'Laydeeez and Gentlemen, I give you the next President of these Great United States of Aaaaamerica – Donald J Tramp.' On cue, waving and smiling the candidate moved behind the podium's bullet-proof glass to the evident relief of his security detail. Instead of beginning to speak he gestured for the crowd to lower the noise-level. The crowd instantly recognised the cryptic political sign-language for 'Go Apeshit' which was precisely what they did.

Finally satisfied by the cacophonous reception the candidate raised his tiny hands, palms facing outward and the noise dropped to a mere crescendo. Only then did Tramp launch into his unique 'call and response' staccato, machine-gun burst oratorical style. "Who's gonna build the Wall?" he enquired. "We are" answered the dotting audience. "You betcha we are, but who's gonna pay for it?" probed the inquisitive candidate. "Mexico" thundered the voices of several thousand straight- men and women. "Damn right they are. And its gonna be a Great Wall. Because I'm a Great Builder. Nobody builds better walls than me" Tramp affirmed as, for the first time in his address, he unleashed a flurry of his trademark hand gestures designed to reinforce and amplify his integrity and sincerity. "Our wall is gonna keep out all them bad hombres. The drug dealers, junkies, murderers, scum, fake journalists and rapists will be stuck on the right side. That's the Mexican side where all them bad dudes belong. Its gonna keep all us good American folk safe. Believe me."

“Why do you hate Mexicans so much?” shouted a lone dissenting Hispanic- accented voice from near the front of the crowd. Without missing a beat, the candidate responded “throw that wetback SOB outta here and I don’t mind how you do it. I’ll pay any fines. Trust me, I’ll pay.” The whole crowd seemed to surge toward the questioner. Muscular arms restrained the dissident troublemaker as though he were a United Airlines passenger on an overbooked flight before he was dragged along the hanger floor, through the rear exit and into the unlit parking lot beyond.

Having dealt with that question the candidate opened a new line of enquiry by asking “What are we gonna do to Washington?” “Drain the swamp” came the immediate response. “Uh huh, what good’ll that do?” “Make politicians honest” came the near-impossible prayer of a reply. “Who’s the most crooked, corrupt, nastiest politician of all?” “Hillary Clitoris” came the deafening riposte. The crowd’s unanimity was remarkable considering the plethora of options available. “What are we gonna do with that nasty woman?” beseeched Tramp. “Lock her lying ass up” brayed the faithful.

“You’re all great” admired the candidate segueing into his close as smoothly as an accomplished high-end real estate salesman moving yet another over-priced penthouse property off the books. “I’m with you because I’m great too. I’m the greatest negotiator EVER and I’m really, really rich. Vote for me on November 8th and I’ll work hard to make you really, really rich too. I promise you that. Now, before I get back onto my private plane and fly off to my next campaign rally I’d really like to introduce you to my amazingly-talented, really rich family. I want you folks to know that this is the bestest family that money can buy and remember, a vote for me is a vote for them too. First my beautiful wife Melanoma Tramp.” Accompanied by wolf whistles, applause, flash photography and a few ill-mannered requests to ‘get ‘em out’ the Albanian born former ‘glamour model’ had lost none of her poise as she effortlessly steered her powder blue Christian Dior dress toward her gloating husband. The Trophy Wife passionately air-kissed the man almost twice her age and amply qualified to be her father as well as her sugar daddy. Next on parade was his daughter Iwanka, scion of his first marriage to the noted Czech clothes horse, Ivaina. Donald cherished Iwanka to the extent that he’d praised her for ‘having a voluptuous body’ and being ‘a piece of ass’. High praise indeed from such a connoisseur of womankind. His admiration went so far that he’d declared ‘If she weren’t my daughter I might be dating her.’ Maybe, he mused, it would soon be time to dump Melanoma, as she neared her ‘use-by-date’, and start over with Iwanka? Perhaps his political ambitions extended to repealing the law prohibiting incest? Failing that he could simply relocate to Appalachia.

Only the two ladies got to join his parade that day as Tramp resumed his favoured role of showman by declaring “The Miss Universe Pageant’s over folks. We gotta go. Got another rally to do tonight. I never rest. Remember to vote USA First. Vote Tramp. We’re gonna make America Bigly again. Thank you. God bless you and goodnight.”

Job done. Man, he was such a great orator. He’d held the audience in his sway. They were putty in his miniscule hands. He could have done anything with them, moulded them to suit his whim. As he was fond of bragging he was so rich, powerful and amazingly awesome that he had to be above the law. He knew that he could shoot some innocent bystander in his hometown of New York City, particularly if the hapless victim was a Latino, black or maybe a woman, and nobody would bat an eyelid. His oral skills really impressed the ladies. He must be the Greatest Orator since, since who? Who might conceivably be better than him? He beckoned his campaign manager and chief sycophant Kellyanne Bowling-Green over and quizzed her “Hey, KBG, who’s the greatest orator like ever, other than me of course?”

“Wow, better than you Boss?” she was stunned by The Don posing a question that inferred some other inhabitant of the planet might just have excelled at something better than him. “Hold your horses, I’ll Google it.” She tapped away at her iPad, with extended fingernails embellished with a Stars and Stripes motif. “Got it, according to Google, the greatest political orator was some Roman dude called Marcus Tullius Cicero. Runners up include Sir Winston Churchill, JFK, Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and, OMG, I can’t believe it, Barack Alabama! Apart from the Kenyan-born phoney President I’ve never heard of any of these people.”

“OK, is this Cicero guy still alive? Should I meet him and have a showdown in a televised debate? I’ll nail him just like I nailed little Marcos Rubitout.”

“I don’t think that’s gonna happen Boss, says here that he died in 43BC.”

“What’s this 43BC crap all about? Was that his address? He lived in some sort of Condo complex?”

“No, Donald that’s like, the date. It means it was, er, like a really, really long time ago. Like even before your first marriage.”

“OK, we’ll leave it then. Nobody’s ever heard of him because he’s a nobody. He’s never been on TV, right? He never had his own show on national network syndication. So, officially that means I’m the Greatest Orator EVER.”

With that the debate was settled. Cicero had been trashed and put in his place by a bombastic orange braggart from New York City. History and Culture didn’t count for much in Tramp’s world, he was focused on the main prize – the greatest job opening on the planet – the Presidency of the United States of America, and all of the money-making opportunities that being the Commander-in-Chief entailed.

“Let’s get back in the air KBG. Where’s our next rally?” Kellyanne’s patriotic fingernails tapped away again. “Touchdown in Cicero, Illinois in sixty-five minutes. WOW! Is that a coincidence or what? That Roman orator was named after a city right here in the States. That’s just freakin’ awesome.”

“Like I keep saying KBG, America First. Sixty-five minutes you say? That’s just perfect. I’ve got enough time to fire off a few tweets, seems like hours since I last dissed anyone. Gotta keep those direct lines of communication with my people open and cut out the corrupt media.”

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